FLOWER COMICS
flowersフラワーコミックス

ブロンズの天使

6

さいとうちほ
Chiho Saito Presents

ブロンズの天使
6
さいとうちほ

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すべてを捨てて、
ダンテスと駆け落ちする道を
選んだナターリア。
ふたりは、ロシアを離れ、
フランスへと向かうことにする。
しかし、ナターリアは
家族を裏切ってきたことと、
未来への不安で、
混乱してしまう。
彼女が苦しむ姿に触れた
ダンテスは、ある決意をするが…。
背徳の愛に揺れる、第6巻!!

flowers
フラワーコミックス

Bronze no Tenshi
Volume 6
Chapter 21

Scanned by
Otohime

Translated by
Otohime

Proofread by
Maris

Edited by
Montana

Bronze no Tenshi 6

Chiho Saito

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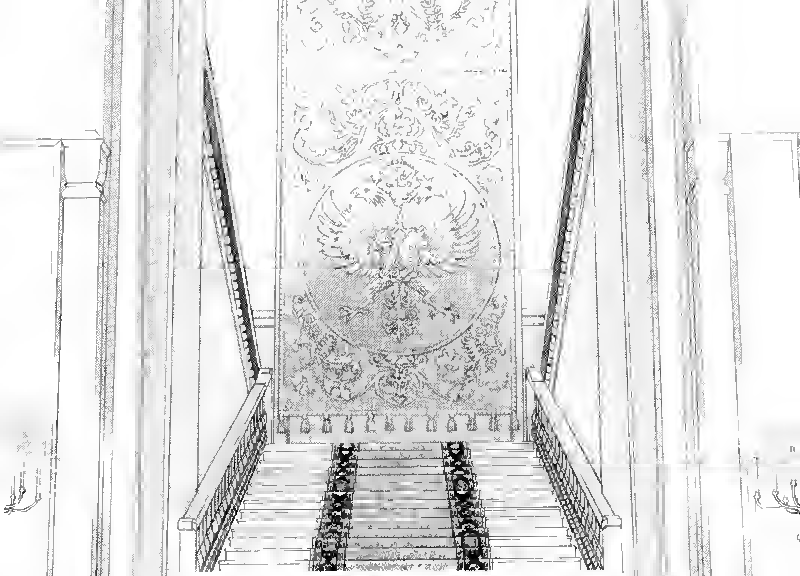

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Vol. 21 Love's Limits

Rattle
clatter

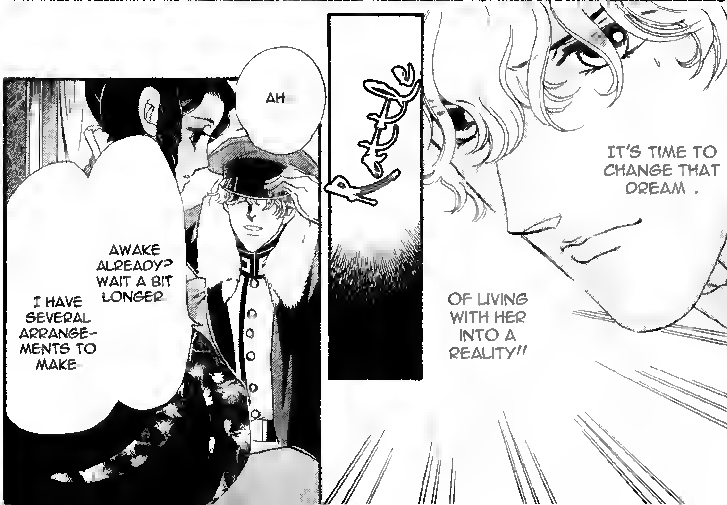
"Where is Natalia?"
MASHIKA, SASHIKA, GRISHIKA, NATASHIKA
"Mom!! Mom, where are you?"
"Valentina, Alexandra, do you know where she is?"
"Well..."
FORGIVE ME!!

ALEXANDRA, PLEASE,
HELP SASHA IN ANY WAY YOU CAN.
EKATERINA, FORGIVE ME FOR TAKING GEORGES D'ANTHES WITH ME.
YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HIM BEING KILLED IN THE DUEL ANYMORE
IT'S OKAY THOUGH YOUR MOM WON'T BE THERE, YOUR DAD WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU
I CAN'T EVEN ASK FOR YOUR FORGIVENESS
YOU WILL HATE ME ALL YOUR LIFE
SASHA...

squeeze
MY BELOVED SASHA!!
WE LIVED TOGETHER FOR SIX YEARS!!
Rustle Rustle
ALL OF THIS...
IT FEELS LIKE A DREAM
YOU WILL BE CHOKED BY SORROW!!

A FEW DAYS AGO I CONVINCED HER TO ELOPE.
BUT NOW THINKING ABOUT IT...
THAT WAS... NOTHING BUT AN EMPTY DREAM
I WAS PREPARED TO DIE UNTIL A SHORT TIME AGO.

I NEVER WENT BEYOND THE DISPLAY OF LOVE...
I ONLY WISHED FOR THINGS TO BE LIKE THAT, AND FOR HER TO BE MINE ALONE.
BUT NOW SHE IS IN MY ARMS,
AND SHE SAID SHE WOULD COME AWAY WITH ME.


IT'S TIME TO CHANGE THAT DREAM.
OF LIVING WITH HER INTO A REALITY!!
AH
AWAKE ALREADY? WAIT A BIT LONGER
I HAVE SEVERAL ARRANGE-MENTS TO MAKE

THERE IS A HARBOUR...
WHERE ARE WE?
ARRANGE-MENTS...
WE ARE REALLY ON TO...
FLORE...
Pattle
Pattle
Pattle
I'M RUNNING AWAY...
TO STOP THE DUEL
I WON'T BE ABLE TO MEET THE PEOPLE I KNOW ANYMORE
ISN'T THAT...
MR. ZHUKOVSKY!?

THIS IS...
NOT A DREAM.

IT'S SNOWING A LOT.
I LEAVE THE DINNER HERE, OKAY?
THANK YOU. YOU MAY LEAVE NOW.
IF YOU NEED SOMETHING ELSE, RING THE BELL.

WHEN YOUR WIFE ARRIVED,
SHE WAS GHASTLY PALE. IS SHE ALL RIGHT?
WIFE...
YES, SHE IS.
AH, MAY I ASK YOU A FAVOUR?
SEND THIS LETTER TONIGHT
OF COURSE
NATALIE...
YOU SHOULD EAT THE SOUP WHILE IT'S STILL HO
!
SORRY...
I WAS CLEANING MYSELF UP A BIT
I DON'T MIND ABOUT DINNER. I'M NOT HUNGRY.
YOU SHOULD EAT
WE WILL BE TRAVELLING BY BOAT TOMORROW
EH...

I SENT A LETTER TO MY SERVANT,
ASKING HIM TO BRING MY MONEY AND OTHER ASSETS TO ME.
I ALSO MADE PREPARATIONS FOR THE BOAT.
THIS IS ALL SO SUDDEN, SO WE WILL GO TO FRANCE
TOMORROW AFTERNOON WE WILL BOARD A SHIP TO EUROPE.
I'M FRIGHTENED...
FRANCE.
EUROPE.
ARE WE GOING TO FRANCE?
NO.
THEN WE HAVE TO LEAVE RUSSIA.
I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO IMAGINE IT.
I...
I'M GOING TO CRY.

I WAS NEVER EVEN ABLE TO IMAGINE THAT THIS JOYFUL NIGHT WOULD COME ONE DAY
UNTIL NOW,
I HAVE BEEN RELYING ON KEREN.
BUT FROM NOW ON I WILL GET BY ON MY OWN.
I'M SURE I CAN DO IT.
NATALIE ...
IF YOU ARE GOING TO LIVE WITH ME...

NATALIE...
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE...
WHO CAN MAKE ME HAPPY
HAPPY
I CAN'T IMAGINE...
A FUTURE WITH HIM

MY HEAD AND BODY...
ARE GETTING HOTTER...
AND HOTTER...
NO!

NO...
THIS IS WRONG.
STOP...

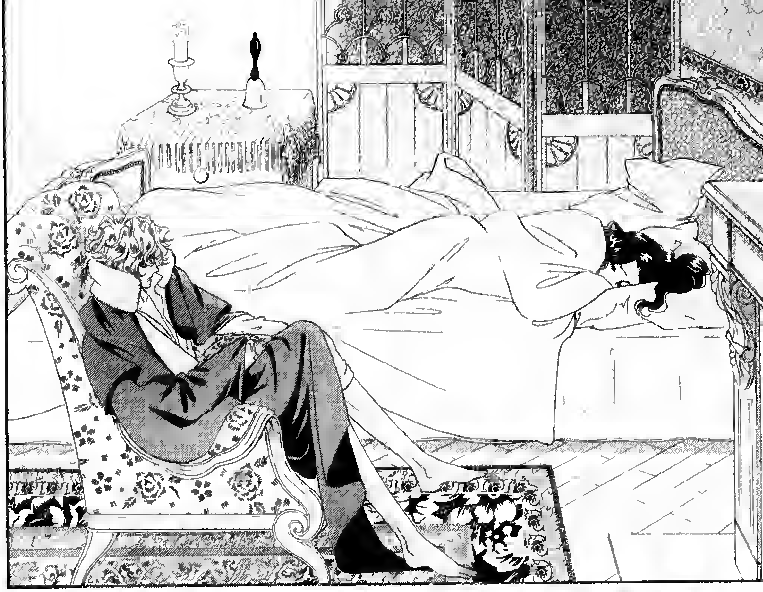
IT'S NO GOOD.
DO YOU HAVE A FEVER?

NATALIE?

I DIDN'T EVEN THINK ABOUT BEING HAPPY
I JUST...DIDN'T WANT BOTH OF YOU TO DIE IN THE DUEL...
BUT NOW...
I STARTED TO BE HAPPY...
IS WRONG TO BE HAPPY?
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?
IT'S UNFOR-GIVABLE...
LET'S COOL DOWN YOUR FEVER.
I WILL BRING SOME ICE...
NO...
DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE...
EMBRACE ME...

NO...
Pound
CAN'T YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND?
I WILL GO TO FRANCE WITH YOU.
PLEASE, DON'T LEAVE ME BEHIND.
TOO MUCH HAPPENED TODAY AND MY MIND IS IN CHAOS.
WHEN THE FEVER COOLS DOWN I WILL RETURN BACK TO NORMAL...

WHEN TOMORROW COMES...
SASHA
GOOD NIGHT...
ZZZ



GEORGES D'ANTHES
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO

WE LOVE EACH OTHER
HER NERVOUSNESS AND CONFUSION WILL PASS
IF I LOVE HER WITH ALL MY HEART, HER DOUBTS WILL VANISH
THERE IS NO REASON TO HESITATE
I SHOULD WAIT UNTIL SHE CALMS DOWN
NO.
SHE WILL SEE THAT WE CAN'T BE SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER
IF WE EMBRACE EACH OTHER ONCE,

I HAVE BROUGHT HER ALONG PRETENDING NOT TO KNOW THAT
INDULGING MYSELF IN HER
SHE WILL BE UNHAPPY.
IF SHE LEAVES RUSSIA, SHE MAY BE UNHAPPY THE REST OF HER LIFE.
THE PRICE SHE HAS TO PAY IS TOO HIGH.
IF SHE CAN'T ENDURE IT...
LET'S SPEAK FRANKLY.
I HAVE BEEN PRETENDING NOT TO KNOW FOR SURE UNTIL NOW.
NO.

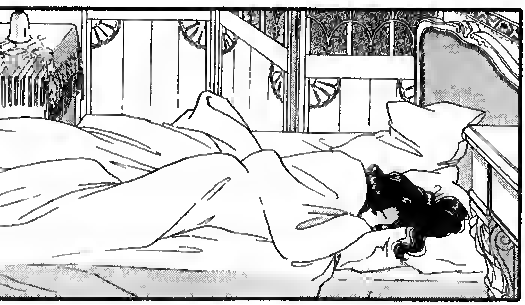
MY CHEST...
HURTS SO MUCH.

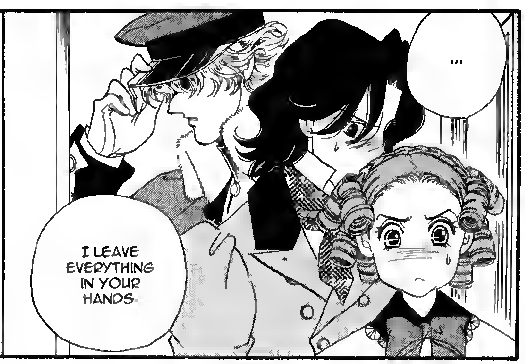
RATTLE
MR D'ANTHES
knock knock
YOU HAVE SOME GUESTS
I WILL COME DOWN IN A MOMENT
TELL THEM TO WAIT

I RECEIVED YOUR LETTER EARLY THIS MORNING
I DIDN'T WANT TO COME!
YOU TEMPTED MY SISTER TO COME TO SUCH A PLACE WITH YOU
I DIDN'T THINK THAT YOU WOULD RESPOND, MS ALEXANDRA
AND THIS IS?
I'M HER BROTHER, SERGEI
LAST NIGHT, I QUICKLY MADE UP AN EXCUSE THAT SERGEI WAS ILL WITH MEASLES AND NATALIA WENT TO NURSE HIM, SINCE SHE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS HAD MEASLES
THAT'S SPLENDID
YOU ARE SMART

I LOVE PUSHKIN AS A HUMAN BEING
I RESPECT HIM.
HE IS MY BELOVED BROTHER-IN-LAW
BARON D'ANTHES!
I KNOW MY BROTHER-IN-LAW CHALLENGE YOU TO A DUEL.
YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ANYONE ELSE THE TRUTH, HAVE YOU?
Dang
I CALLED YOU HERE BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO TAKE HER HOME
IF NOT I WILL CHALLENGE YOU TO A DUEL TOO!
RETURN MY SISTER TO PUSHKIN!!
I WANT YOU TO KNOW,
NOTHING HAPPENED
...
WE DIDN'T HAVE INTIMATE RELATIONS

UNDERSTOOD
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND...
YOU MUST APOLOGIZE TO MR PUSKIN AND PROMISE HIM...
THAT YOU WILL MARRY EKATERINA
AND YOU HAVE TO SWEAR YOU WILL CAST ASIDE YOUR FEELING FOR NATALIA





VERY WELL.
LIFE IS DEAR TO ME

WAIT!
WHAT SHOULD I TELL NATALIA TO MAKE HER UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED...
WHATEVER UNPLEASANT THING YOU THINK ABOUT ME...
SHE WAS SEIZED WITH FEAR AND CONVINCED ME TO ELOPE.
NATALIA...
I WAS JUST FOOLING AROUND WITH HER
FOOLING AROUND

ALEXANDRA, SERGEI, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
NATALIA.
HE CALLED US.
HE WANTS US TO TAKE YOU HOME.
WHY...?
...
NATALIA! THAT'S THE KIND OF MAN HE IS
YOU UNDERSTAND, RIGHT?
HE WAS GOING TO ABANDON YOU!
HE WANTED TO MARRY EKATERINA BECAUSE HIS LIFE IS DEAR TO HIM...

THAT'S NOT TRUE.
HE IS NOT LIKE THAT.
I'M SURE...
HE HAS SOME REASON
tap
WAKE UP.

MOST OF YOUR CHARM WAS BEING PUSHKIN'S WIFE
BUT I FINALLY UNDERSTAND
THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I WAS CERTAINLY DAZZLED BY YOUR CHARM
I HAD FUN AT THE BALLS,
COMPETING WITH PUSHKIN, THE RUSSIAN POET,
THE TSAR, AND THE HUNDREDS OF MEN WHO LONG FOR THE GREATEST BEAUTY IN THE COURT,
AND STEALING A MARCH ON THEM.
IF YOU WEREN'T PUSHKIN'S WIFE,
YOU WOULD BE NOTHING BUT A MEDIOCRE BEAUTY,
NO DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER THAT I'VE BEEN WITH
THERE IS NO REASON FOR ME TO MARRY YOU.

DON'T TALK TO ME LIKE THAT...
I DON'T CARE IF MY WIFE IS MS EKATERINA OR ANYONE ELSE
AND THERE WILL BE NO NEED TO MARRY A RICH GIRL
I CAN KEEP BEING PROMOTED,
I WILL BE THE HEIR OF BARON HEECKEREN
IF I STAY IN RUSSIA THIS WAY,
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
DON'T BE RECKLESS WITH HER!
GET OUT OF MY WAY!
LISTEN TO ME.
Sbam
AH...

I LOST INTEREST IN YOU LAST NIGHT.
I'M FED UP WITH YOUR CHILDISH-NESS.

fall
NATALIA...?
ARE YOU OK?
HANG ON, SISTER
tap
tap
tap
hah
hah

YOUNG MASTER!!
YOU WERE HERE
I WENT TO THE INN AND WAS TOLD YOU WEREN'T THERE ANYMORE. I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.
WHERE IS MADAME?
THERE WAS NO ONE THERE
I BROUGHT THE MONEY
I DON'T NEED IT.
NOT ANY-MORE...

NATALIE...

PLEASE, HATE ME,

WITH THE SAME INTENSE PASSION...

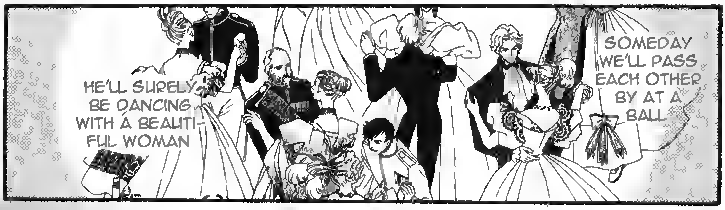
THAT YOU LOVED ME.

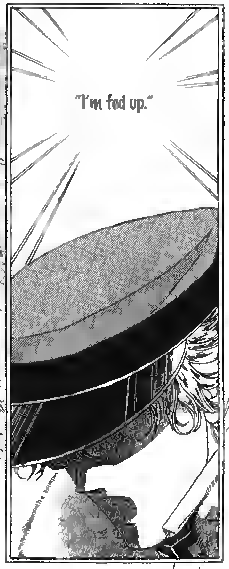
THAT MAN WAS SO RUDE!!
IF BY ANY CHANCE HE MARRIES EKATERINA,
I WON'T EVER CALL HIM BROTHER-IN-LAW
OF COURSE NOT!!

I MUST KEEP LIVING

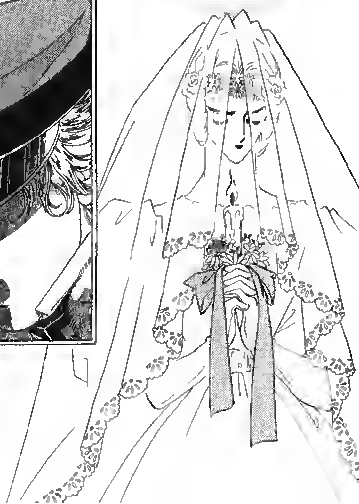
EVEN SO

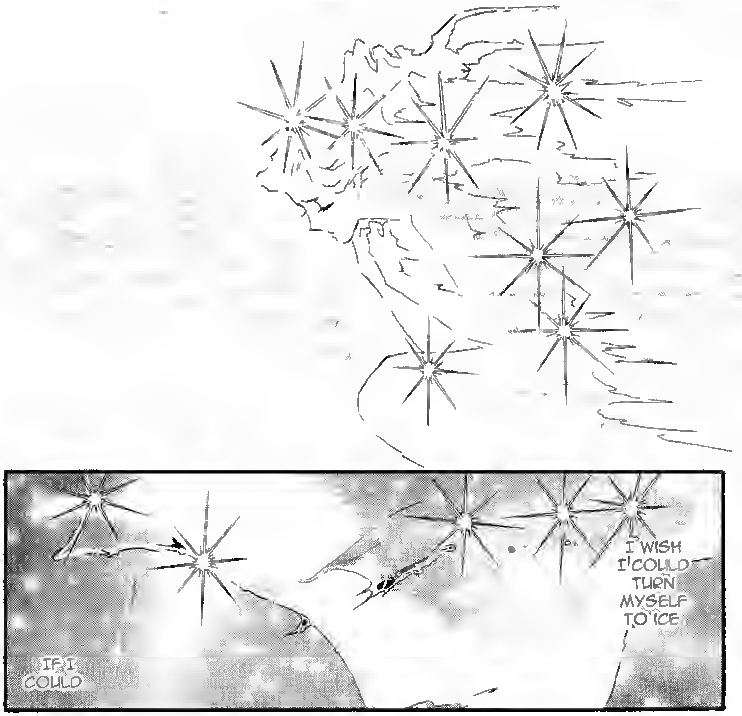
HE HATES ME



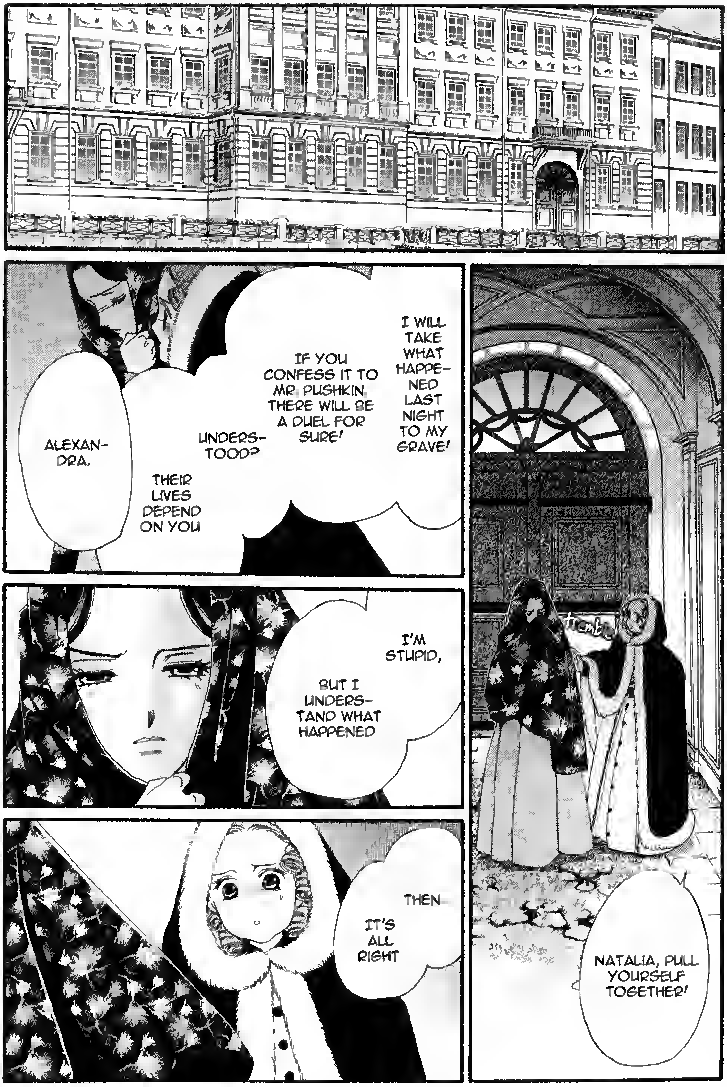


MAYBE HE'LL MARRY EKATERINA.





I WOULDN'T FEEL ANYTHING ANYMORE


I WILL TAKE WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT TO MY GRAVE!
IF YOU CONFESS IT TO MR. PUSHKIN, THERE WILL BE A DUEL FOR SURE!
UNDERSTOOD?
ALEXANDRA.
THEIR LIVES DEPEND ON YOU
I'M STUPID,
BUT I UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED
THEN IT'S ALL RIGHT
NATALIA, PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!

ARE YOU OK, NATALIA?
YOU DIDN'T GET THE MEASLES AGAIN, DID YOU?
YOUR EYES ARE RED SHOULDN'T YOU GO SLEEP A BIT?
I WENT TO BRING HER BACK HOME BECAUSE SHE WAS VERY TIRED
IT SEEMS THE WORST PART HAS PASSED
MOM!! ADI!!
IS SERGEI CURED FROM THE MEASLES?
Mom
WELCOME BACK
I THINK MR ZHUKOVSKY WAS HERE SOME TIME AGO, BUT HE SOON WENT BACK HOME
IN HIS STUDY
WHERE IS SASHA?
SASHA, IT'S ME
THEY TALKED ABOUT THE DUEL.
KNOCK KNOCK

I HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK YOU.
HOW IS SERGEI?
IT'S ABOUT THE DUEL
I HAVE NO MORE DOUBTS.
LET GEORGES D'ANTHES AND EKATERINA MARRY.
WITHDRAW THE CHA-LLENGE, PLEASE

LIKE AN EMPTY SHELL
I DON'T FEEL ANY-THING... FOR HIM ANYMORE
ARE YOU OKAY WITH THAT? HE...
SHE IS SO CALM.
END THIS PROBLEM QUICKLY
I DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE THAT HE HAS CHOSEN TO MARRY IN ORDER TO AVOID THE DUEL.
D'ANTHES DOESN'T ACCEPT THE CON-DITION THAT SAYS THAT I WILL WITHDRAW THE CHALLENGE AFTER THE WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT.
BUT... THE ORDER OF THINGS HASN'T BEEN SETTLED YET
I WANT OUR LIVES TO RETURN TO THE WAY THEY WERE SOON...
PLEASE, DEAR

EMPTY EYES
NATALIA DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
Close
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN WITH THAT GUY?
...

I'M BACK, BUT MY HEART IS DEAD.
O'AN-THES!!
WHY ARE YOU MAKING SUCH A FACE!

THE LADIES ARE WAITING IMPATIENTLY FOR YOU TO ASK THEM TO DANCE
I'M AS USELESS AS A CORPSE NOW
I'M NOT AN APPROPRIATE DANCE PARTNER
WHICH REMINDS ME I HEARD AN OUTRAGEOUS RUMOUR, THAT YOU WERE GOING TO MARRY
MRS PUSHKIN CAN'T BE YOUR PARTNER
WHAT
AH...
YOU HEARD THE CONDITION TO AVOID THE DUEL, RIGHT?
I'M REALLY SORRY
THAT YOU'VE BEEN DRAWN INTO THIS
MS EKATERINA!
MR D'ANTHES
DON'T SAY THAT
DON'T TELL ME, IT'S
MRS PUSHKIN CAME WITH YOU TONIGHT?
HOW IS SHE NOW?

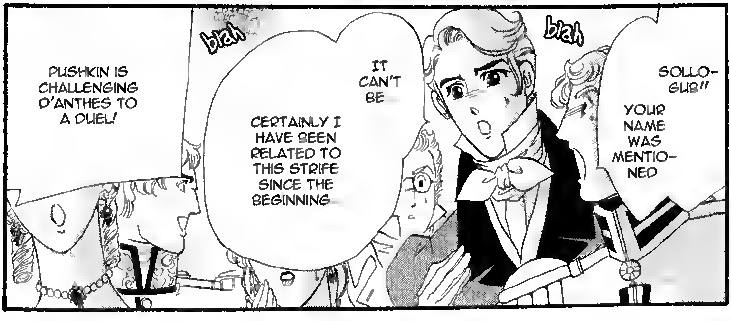
SHE IS NOT FEELING WELL.
SHE SEEMS TO HAVE CHANGED ALL OF A SUDDEN.
SHE DOES NOTHING BUT ENCOURAGE ME TO MARRY YOU
BUT IT FEELS LIKE IT'S AN OBLIGATION TO HER
SHE DOESN'T PUT HER HEART IN IT...
I SEE
IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE EITHER
I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD COME TO THIS
I APOLOGIZE TO YOU AND NATALIA
IT SEEMS AS IF I'M FORCING MY WAY BETWEEN YOU
I'M SORRY...
RIGHT NOW... YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD...
WHO WOULD SAY THOSE WORDS TO ME.
THE ONLY ONE WHO APPROVES OUR RELATIONSHIP...
YOU ARE SO GENTLE...

AH...
!
PUSHKIN
HE IS A MAN CAPABLE OF CHANGING FROM ONE SISTER TO THE OTHER IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE,
FOR HIS OWN SAFETY
HE DOESN'T CARE IF HE MAKES A WOMAN OR TWO CRY
WAIT A MINUTE
EKATE-RINA!!
GET AWAY FROM HIM!!

MY INTENTION IS TO APOLOGIZE SINCERELY TO YOU
DAMN SCOUNDREL!
YOU DON'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO DUEL.
MY INTENTIONS ARE DIFFERENT FROM MY FATHER'S.
YOU KNOW THAT I WANT TO DUEL WITH YOU, DON'T YOU?
I WILL PROPOSE MARRIAGE TO MS EKATERINA AFTERWARDS
YOU
YOU INTEND TO SURVIVE, DON'T YOU?
AFTER KILLING ME,
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY REASON TO MARRY EKATERINA.
I'M SURE YOU WILL MARRY NATALIA
...
NATALIA IS LIKE A GHOST NOW,
BECAUSE YOU DID SOMETHING TO HER.
WAIT!
MR. D'ANTHES...
THAT WAS AN INSULT TO MS. EKATERINA!
TAKE IT BACK
YOU ARE THE ONE INSULTING HER...

WHY DON'T YOU CHOOSE TO FIGHT WITH ME FAIR AND SQUARE, INSTEAD OF ENTER INTO A LOVELESS MARRIAGE WITH EKATERINA?
IT WOULD BE MUCH BETTER TO RISK OUR LIVES FOR NATALIA.
I ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE.
LET'S DECIDE THE CONDITIONS, DATE AND TIME.
Bzzt
Bzzt
Bzzt

THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR, VICOMTE D'ARCHIAC, WILL BE MY SECOND
COUNT SOLLOGUB IS UPSTAIRS
I WILL ASK HIM TO ACT AS MY SECOND
AS FOR THE CONDITIONS, IT WILL BE DECIDED BY FIRST BLOOD!"


bish
bish
PUSHKIN IS CHALLENGING D'ANTHES TO A DUEL!
?
IT CAN'T BE
CERTAINLY I HAVE BEEN RELATED TO THIS STRIFE SINCE THE BEGINNING
SOLLO-GUB!"
YOUR NAME WAS MENTIO-NED

IT'S INTO-
LERABLE!
YOUR
MAJESTY_

DUELS ARE FORBIDDEN.
DON'T FORGET, IT MEANS A TRANSGRESSION TO THE TSAR'S ORDERS
YOU UNDERSTAND, RIGHT?
BARON GEORGES-CHARLES DE HEECKEREN D'ANTHES
ALEXANDER PUSHKIN

Winter Palace
JUDGING FROM THE LOOKS ON THEIR FACES AT THAT MOMENT...

THEY DIDN'T SEEM TO AGREE
IT WAS LIKE TWO BEASTS FACING EACH OTHER, FANGS BARED
YOU HAVE TO SPEAK WITH PUSHKIN
ME?
HMPH
COUNT BENKENDORF
DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?
YOU ARE THE CENSOR OF HIS BOOKS
I HAVE THE ROLE OF D'ANTHES'S GUARDIAN, SO I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING
I HEARD SOME RUMOURS
BUT ZHUKOVSKY IS DEALING WITH THIS MATTER. I TRUST HE WILL ARRANGE A SETTLEMENT
ONE OF THEM IS AN INDISPENSABLE BEAUTY IN HIGH SOCIETY
THE OTHER IS OUR NATIONAL INTELLECTUAL TREASURE
IF EITHER OF THEM DIES—
ZHUKOVSKY IS A KIND GENTLEMAN, BUT HE WON'T BE ABLE TO RESTRAIN THEM
!
IT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA TO LEAVE THEM ALONE

THEY KICKED UP QUITE A FUSS IN FRONT OF A LOT OF PEOPLE
IT WAS REGRET-TABLE
I WAS GLAD TO LEAVE THEM
sigh
Sob
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
"WHAT" YOU SAY
TO SAVE THE EMPRESS' FACE,
I HAVE TO SUMMON PUSHKIN AND LECTURE HIM—
THAT DUELS ARE FOR-BIDDEN
I WILL LET THE SPY ON MRS PUSHKIN USE HER OWN TACTICS
AND THEN?

FOR THOSE TWO BEASTS TO KILL EACH OTHER.
IT WILL NOT END LIKE THIS.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
TELL HER THAT SHE IS DOING A GOOD JOB.
THIS OPPORTUNITY HAS MATURED MORE THAN ENOUGH
THE SLIGHTEST DISTURBANCE WILL TRIGGER A NEW CHANCE.

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The Barcardle Team

Bronze no Tenshi
Volume 6
Chapter 22

Scanned by
Otohime

Translated by
Otohime

Proofread by
Maris

Edited by
Montana

Vol. 22 Our Tsar

BILLS BILLS !!
AGAIN, A PILE OF DEBT CLAIMS!
MASTER, THE COACHMAN, THE LIQUOR STORE OWNER AND THE MILKMAN
HAVE BEEN AWAITING PAYMENT FOR THE LAST FOUR MONTHS
EVERYTHING TOTALS TO 500 ROUBLES
...
BENKENDORF HAS SENT FOR ME.
MASTER, THESE ARE TODAY'S LETTERS
EXCUSE ME. I WILL DISCUSS IT WITH MY LADY.
DON'T WAKE HER
DON'T
I THINK SHE IS STILL SLEEPING

YOU ONLY SLEEP THE DAYS AWAY
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU?
NATALIA

!
WAKE UP
IT'S ALMOST NOON
I WASN'T SLEEPING
I JUST HAD MY EYES CLOSED
SOMEONE COULD BE COMING.
EVERY-BODY IS AWAKE.
SO?
WE ARE HUSBAND AND WIFE

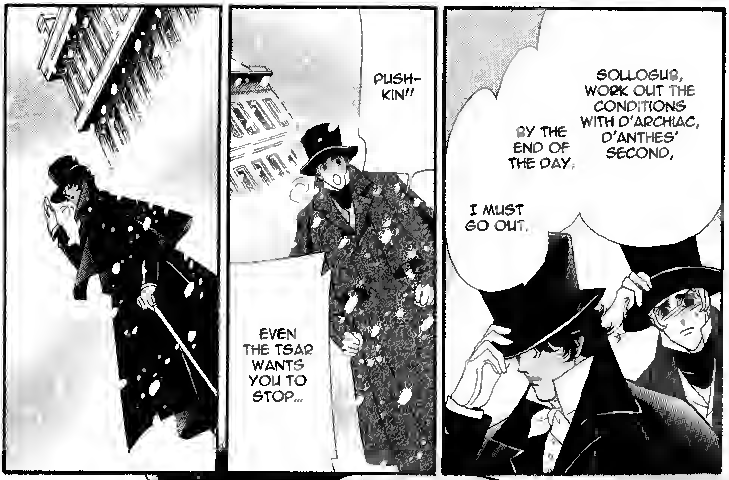
...
NATA-
LIA...
TELL ME WHAT YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT.
YOU'RE... ACTING STRANGE.
I'M NOT THINKING ANYTHING.
I DON'T BLAME OR RESENT YOU.
LISTEN TO ME.
WERE YOU THINKING ABOUT THAT MAN...?
NATALIA
...
I'M SERIOUS.
LISTEN TO ME...
NATALIA!!

WHO IS SHE?
I DON'T KNOW THIS WOMAN...
AH??
ARE...
ARE YOU OK?

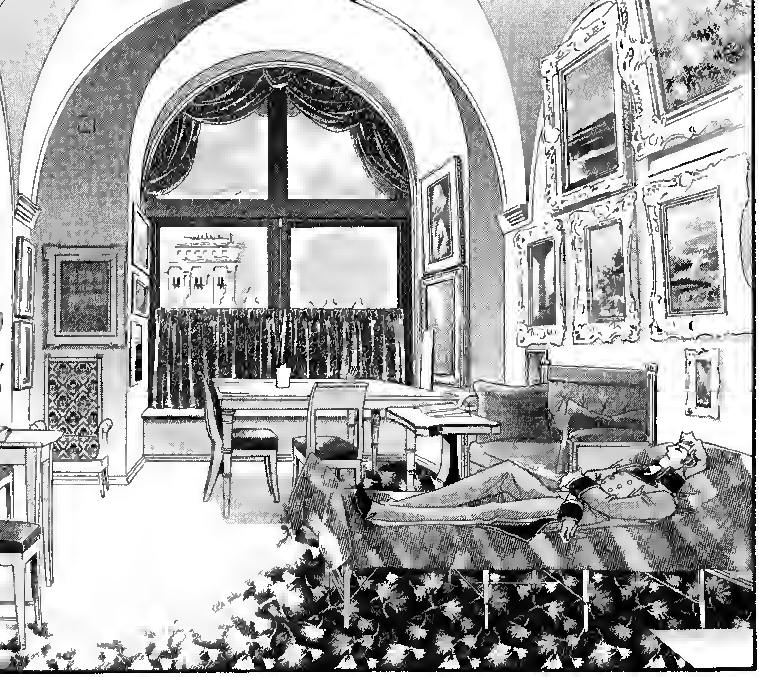
MASTER,
COUNT SOLLOGUB IS HERE...
SHOW HIM TO THE STUDY!
Z Z Z
MASTER,
THERE ARE ALSO BILL COLLECTORS...
SEND THEM AWAY!!
MY LEGS,
MY WHOLE BODY,
FEELS LIKE IS GOING TO TUMBLE DOWN.

MY BELOVED ANGEL
WHOM I TREASU- RED SO MUCH
SHE'S GONE
THEN
REGARDING THE CONDI- TIONS OF YOUR DUEL WITH SECOND LIEUTENANT D'ANTHES...
WHAT DO YOU REQUEST?
I'M READY TO GO BEYOND THE LIMITS OF WHAT IS SAFE.
MY FEELINGS ARE THE SAME AS THEY WERE LAST NIGHT

THE RANGE WILL BE TEN PACES
SHOOTING AT A DISTANCE OF TEN PACES?
THAT'S HORRIBLE! IT WILL BE A FATAL WOUND.


SOLLOGUB, WORK OUT THE CONDITIONS WITH D'ARCHIAC, D'ANTHES' SECOND,
BY THE END OF THE DAY.
I MUST GO OUT.
PUSHKIN!!
EVEN THE TSAR WANTS YOU TO STOP...

PUSHKIN,
HIS MAJESTY HAS BEEN WAITING FOR YOU
THOUGH HE IS VERY BUSY HE HAS SPARED SOME OF HIS PRECIOUS TIME FOR YOU
DON'T FORGET TO SHOW HIM SOME GRATITUDE
YOUR MAJESTY,
HE IS HERE
HIS MAJESTY IS CONCERNED BY THE UPROAR AROUND THE DUEL OF A MERE POET...
BE CAREFUL OF WHAT YOU SAY



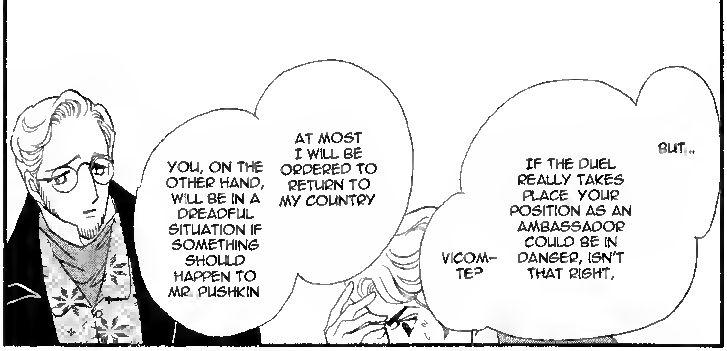
PUSHKIN

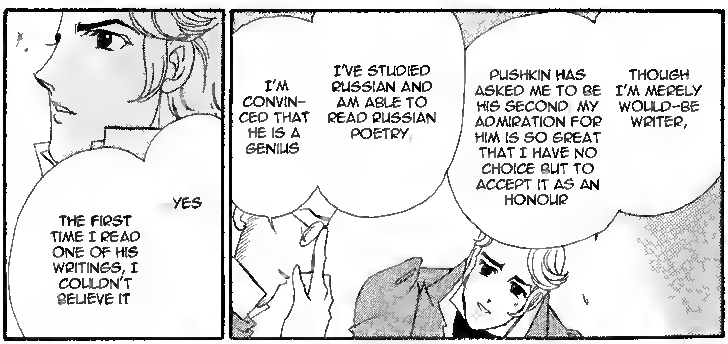
WE HAVE TO TALK

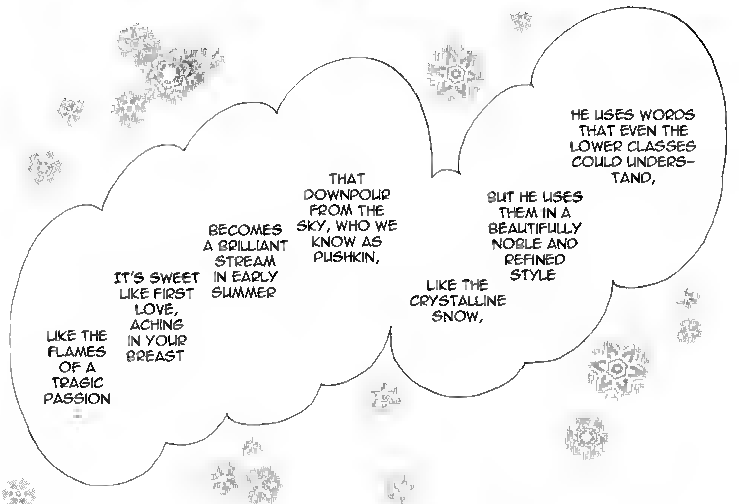
French Embassy

French Ambassador, Vicomte D'Archiac
COUNT SOLLOGUB.
I MET WITH D'ANTHES THIS MORNING TOO,
"My wish?
Whatever Pushkin wishes."
I have none.

IT'S UNAVOIDABLE
LET'S WORK OUT THE CONDITIONS AND A MODE OF RECONCILIATION
BEYOND THAT, ALL WE CAN DO IS HOPE FOR THE TSAR TO INTERVENE
"If he wants to kill me in the duel..."
agree."


AT MOST I WILL BE ORDERED TO RETURN TO MY COUNTRY
YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL BE IN A DREADFUL SITUATION IF SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO MR. PUSHKIN
BUT...
IF THE DUEL REALLY TAKES PLACE YOUR POSITION AS AN AMBASSADOR COULD BE IN DANGER, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, VICOMTE?


YES
THE FIRST TIME I READ ONE OF HIS WRITINGS, I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT
I'M CONVINCED THAT HE IS A GENIUS
I'VE STUDIED RUSSIAN AND AM ABLE TO READ RUSSIAN POETRY
PUSHKIN HAS ASKED ME TO BE HIS SECOND. MY ADMIRATION FOR HIM IS SO GREAT THAT I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT IT AS AN HONOUR
THOUGH I'M MERELY WOULD-BE WRITER,


LIKE THE FLAMES OF A TRAGIC PASSION
IT'S SWEET LIKE FIRST LOVE, ACHING IN YOUR BREAST
BECOMES A BRILLIANT STREAM IN EARLY SUMMER
THAT DOWNPOUR FROM THE SKY, WHO WE KNOW AS PUSHKIN,
LIKE THE CRYSTALLINE SNOW,
BUT HE USES THEM IN A BEAUTIFULLY NOBLE AND REFINED STYLE
HE USES WORDS THAT EVEN THE LOWER CLASSES COULD UNDERSTAND,

I SEE YOU UNDERSTAND
OF COURSE
BUT HIS LATEST WORKS
ARE A BIT DIFFICULT FOR ME..
ARE THEY NOT GOOD?
HE IS THE RUSSIAN MOZART, OR HOMER, OR SHAKESPEARE!!
YES!!
USING THE ANCIENT RUSSIAN LANGUAGE
UNTIL NOW, IT WAS ALL AN IMITATION OF FRENCH LITERATURE
THERE HAS NEVER BEEN LITERATURE LIKE THIS BEFORE IN RUSSIA
IT'S LIKE CHAMELEON-LIKE MUSIC!
NOW HIS WORK HAS BECOME SOLEMN AND DEEP, LOOKING BACK AT TIMES GONE BY
AS THOUGH HE WERE BECOMING HARD TO PLEASE
TO THE POINT THAT EVEN SERFS WHO COULDN'T READ COULD RECITE IT FROM MEMORY
SO YOUNG MEN WHO SYMPATHIZED WITH THEM CAME TOGETHER TO RECITE HIS VERSES, AND IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, THEY HAD SPREAD ALL THROUGH RUSSIA.
HIS PREVIOUS WORKS WERE FILLED WITH YOUTHFUL ROMANTICISM
THAT'S NOT IT
I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT AND THAT DOES HAPPEN
SO PERHAPS HE WILL ASK D'ANTHES TO BE HIS SECOND WHEN HE DUELS NEXT YEAR RIGHT?
ALL I DID WAS MAKE A HARMLESS JOKE ABOUT HIS WIFE
ANYHOW, HE CHALLENGED ME TO A DUEL A YEAR AGO

I HAVE HEARD ALL THE ARISTOCRATS' RUMOURS ABOUT PUSHKIN
HE IS QUITE SPECIAL, DON'T YOU THINK?
HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A RUSSIAN
HE IS BEING WATCHED AND NEEDS A PERMISSION TO TRAVEL ANYWHERE, AS THOUGH HE WERE EXILED
HE DOESN'T HAVE THE INCOME TO BE CONSIDERED A NOBLE
HE MUST WORK FOR HIS MONEY
HE IS A RENOWNED WRITER,
AND HIS WIFE IS A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, THE BELLE OF THE BALL
BUT EVEN SO, THE ARISTOCRATS SPREAD MALICIOUS GOSSIP ABOUT HIM...
BECAUSE HE IS TOO DIFFERENT FROM THEM
MAYBE
HE IS ISOLATED
HIS LITERARY FELLOWS WORSHIP HIM AS THE MESSIAH OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE
THE TRUTH IS THAT HE IS MAKING GREAT PROGRESS IN NO TIME
NO OTHER WRITER CAN COMPARE TO HIM,
NOR CAN ANYBODY TRULY UNDERSTAND IT...
GOGOL IS THE RARE ONE WITH POTENTIAL.
BUT HE HAS FLED THE COUNTRY IN FEAR BECAUSE HIS WORKS ARE REGARDED AS DANGEROUS

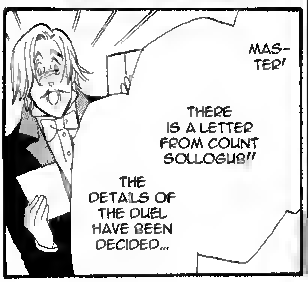
ALL AROUND US THERE ARE ONLY INCOMPLETE WRITERS LIKE MYSELF...
WHO SIMPLY FOLLOW THE TASTES OF THE TRADITIONAL NOBILITY
PUSHKIN HAS BEEN FIGHTING WITH ALL HIS MIGHT, ALONE,
USING LITERATURE AS HIS WEAPON TO REMAIN ALIVE
THERE IS NO ONE WORTHY OF COMPARISON
THIS OFFICE
IS ALSO MY BEDROOM
THE TSAR...
IS NOT VERY FOND OF LITERATURE,
IS HE?

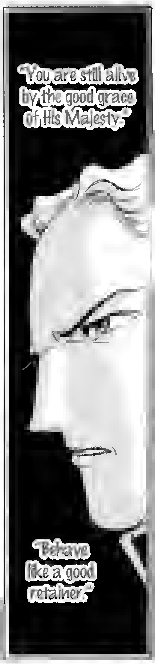
WHEN I'M TIRED FROM WORK I USE THE SOFA IN MY STUDY AS A BED
BEING SURROUNDED BY BOOKS GIVES ME SOME PEACE OF MIND
DO YOU FIND IT STRANGE, PUSHKIN?
YES
I EXPECTED THE BED TO BE MORE SPLENDOROUS
I WAS RAISED IN A MILITARY STYLE
I SLEEP BEST IN AN IRON BED
ME TOO
BEING SURROUNDED BY WAR IN THIS ROOM GIVES ME SOME PEACE OF MIND

ERM...
ABOUT THE DUEL...
DUELS ARE NOT ALLOWED.
I HAVE HEARD THE DETAILS FROM BENKENDORF.
YOU CONCLUDED THAT THE MAN WHO SENT YOU THAT OUTRAGEOUS ANONYMOUS LETTER WAS AMBASSADOR HEECKEREN
YOUR MAJESTY!
I HAVE PROOF THAT I'D BE HAPPY TO SHOW YOU,
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY
ANYWAY,
JUST AS WITH YOUR BOOKS. YOU CAN'T DO WHAT YOU PLEASE UNLESS YOU HAVE MY PERMISSION
UNDERSTOOD?

AS LONG AS I LIVE...
I BE-LONG TO HIM.
YOU ARE ONLY THINKING ABOUT YOUR-SELF.
THINK ABOUT YOUR WIFE.
Shock
NATA...
RETURN HOME AND REPORT THIS GOOD NEWS TO YOUR WIFE.
I HAVE READ YOUR LATEST WORK,
"THE CAPTAIN'S DAUGHTER", AND I GIVE YOU PER-MISSION TO PUBLISH IT.

SBAM


MAS-
TER!
THERE IS A LETTER FROM COUNT SOLLOGUB!!
THE DETAILS OF THE DUEL HAVE BEEN DECIDED...


"You are still alive by the good grace of His Majesty."
"Behave like a good retainer."

"I will return the manuscript of "The Captain's Daughter" to you Pushkin."

"However, you need to remove or rewrite the parts that are underlined in red."
"What?"
"So you'd best not be so optimistic."

EH ...
RECONCI-LIATION?
AND THE RECONCILIA-TION CONDI-TIONS...
HERE ARE THE DUEL CONDI-TIONS,
EVERY-THING
MY LADY! MS. EKATE-RINA MS. ALEXAN-DRA!
MASTER WANTS TO RECON-CILE!
THERE WON'T BE ANY DUEL!
REALLY?
WAS RUINED...
CLOSE

SLAM
IS EKATERINA STILL HERE?
AUNT ZAGRYAZHSKAYA!
I'M SO GLAD
THAT SASHA ACCEPTED THE CONDITIONS
I WAS SO RELIEVED THAT I CRIED!
WHERE IS SASHA?
IDALIA POLETIKA
GOOD EVENING, ALEXANDRA
MASTER HAS GONE OUT.
EKATERINA,
I HEARD THE NEWS FROM ZHUKOVSKY
WHEN I WAS PAYING MY RESPECTS TO MRS ZAGRYAZHSKAYA
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ENGAGEMENT TOGEORGES D'ANTHES.
IT WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT THE BALL TONIGHT AT SALTYKOV'S MANSION, RIGHT?
THANK YOU

AUNT
TONIGHT IS YOUR NIGHT
YOU MUST WEAR THIS TONIGHT, EKATERINA
YES!!
I THOUGHT IT WAS THE RIGHT TIME TO GO AND PREPARE THE DRESSES YOU ASKED ME FOR
I'M SO HAPPY, THANKS A LOT AUNT...
THERE WILL BE A LOT OF INQUI-RIES
IT WOULD BE WORST IF SHE ATTENDED THE BALL
I AGREE
YOU DON'T NEED TO THANK ME!
COME ON, WE HAVE TO MAKE LOTS OF PREPARA-TIONS
I WILL PUT AWAY NATALIA'S DRESS
OH, WELL
NATALIA'S NEW DRESS IS ALSO READY, BUT I DON'T THINK SHE SHOULD APPEAR IN PUBLIC FOR A WHILE
No.
AND NATALIA?
WHAT?
NATA-LIA,
ARE YOU SLEE-PING?
IT'S ME, IDALIA

IOALIA
NATALIA NIKOLAEVNA.
I THINK SO TOO.
BUT ... MAYBE IT WAS FOR THE BEST.
...
SO THIS IS THE NEW DRESS.
AUNT ALWAYS GIVES US DRESSES AS PRE-SENTS
IT'S VERY HELP-FUL.
WHO WOULD HAVE GUESSED IT WOULD END LIKE THIS
I CAN SYMPA-THIZE WITH YOUR PAINFUL POSITION

IT IS..
I'M SURE IT WILL LOOK GREAT AGAINST YOUR FAIR SKIN
IT'S SO PRETTY...
HEY,, WHY DON'T YOU TRY IT ON?
LET ME SEE HOW IT SUITS YOU
LOOK...
DEFINITELY LOVELY
I'M SURE YOU WILL LOOK BEAUTIFUL AND WONDERFUL
I KNOW JUST THE HAIRSTYLE THAT WOULD FIT THIS DRESS
LET ME SHOW YOU
IT SUITS YOU, DON'T YOU THINK?
RIGHT..?
NATALIA

clap clap
LADIES AND GENT-LEMEN, YOUR ATTEN-TION, PLEASE.
Saltykov's Mansion
blah blah
LET'S INTRO-DUCE THE COUPLE WHO IS ANNOUN-CING THEIR ENGAGEMENT TONIGHT.
Oh no!
It can't be!
Eh??
BARON GEORGES-CHARLES DE HEECKEREN D'ANTHES AND...
MS. EKATE-RINA NIKO-LAEVNA GONCHA-ROVA.

Silence
...
COME HERE, BOTH OF YOU
COME NOW, DON'T BE SHY, KISS!
gisse
EVERYONE IS SO SHO-CKED
THAT THEY FORGOT TO CLAP
clap clap
AWW,
YOU ARE SO CHARMING
NOW FOR THE WALTZ!!
YOU HAVE TO DANCE TOGETHER

blah blah blah
PUSHKIN
laugh
I SEE!
D'ANTHES CHOSE THE MARRIAGE OVER THE DUEL!
YOU SUPPOSE PUSHKIN WITHDREW HIS CHALLENGE—
IN EXCHANGE FOR HIM MARRYING HIS WIFE'S SISTER?
LOOK,
TO END ALL THAT FUSS ABOUT THE DUEL?
DON'T YOU THINK IT WAS A MOVE
blah blah blah
THEY ARE ENGAGED—
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?
WAS IT HER PLAIN SISTER THEN?
I THOUGHT HE WAS CHASING AFTER MRS PUSHKIN—
IT CAN'T BE—

PUSHKIN YOU ARE SPEAKING TOO LOUDLY!
Sssh
HE IS GOING TO BE YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW
IT WAS DIFFICULT TO NEGOTIATE A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU
O'ANTHES HAS A LIFELESS EXPRESSION
IS HE ILL?
IF HE HAD CHOSEN TO RETURN TO HIS COUNTRY,
THIS MARRIAGE WOULDN'T NEED TO HAPPEN
I'M NOT RECONCILED WITH HIM, NOR WILL I ACCEPT HIM AS MY BROTHER-IN-LAW
I STILL WANT REVENGE ON HIM!
HE ACTED RECKLESSLY TOWARDS NATALIA!!
LET HIM SPEND THE REST OF HIS LIFE AS A COWARD WHO CHOSE A LOVELESS MARRIAGE TO ESCAPE FROM A DUEL!
MR D'ANTHES...?
EH
LOOK
blah

MRS PUSHKIN
SHE IS BEAUTIFUL.
SHE IS ATTENDING THE ENGAGEMENT PARTY BETWEEN HER SISTER AND HER FORMER LOVER
NEVERTHELESS SHE IS SMILING

LIKE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL FLOWER...
AH
I'M SORRY
NO PROBLEM
DANCING IS NOT MY FORTE
I WILL PRACTICE A LITTLE BIT MORE
AD!!

SASHA,
DON'T BLAME ALEXANDRA
WHY DID YOU BRING NATALIA TONIGHT?
I'M SORRY!!
SHE WANTED TO ATTEND
MY AUNT MADE THIS NEW DRESS FOR ME
AS SOON AS I PUT IT ON, I WANTED TO SHOW IT TO YOU
ISN'T IT PRETTY?
THE WALTZ HAS ENDED
I HAVEN'T YET CONGRATULATED EKATERINA
LET'S GO TOGETHER
I CAN'T GO
REALLY? WELL, THEN I WILL GO MYSELF
I CAN'T LOOK AT HER!!
MR. PUSHKIN?

CONGRATULATIONS, EKATERINA
I'M GLAD FOR YOU
THANKS, NATALIA
GEORGES, D'ANTHES, REMEMBER
WHY DID YOU SEPARATE FROM HER
YOU ARE THE PRETTIEST ONE HERE TONIGHT
I'M SURE YOU WILL BE VERY HAPPY
THANKS

YOU EVEN BEHAVED LIKE A JERK BECAUSE YOU WISHED FOR HER HAPPINESS.
YOUNG BARON HEECKE-REN,
WHISPER WHISPER
MRS. PUSHKIN
I WILL MAKE HER HAPPY
DON'T GIVE IN TO EMOTION
BE KIND TO MY SISTER, PLEASE

IT WILL BE AN HONOUR, BARON HEECKEREN.
AS I WILL BE YOUR RELATIVE SOON, I WOULD LIKE TO GET ON WELL WITH YOU
YOU SHOULD DANCE THE FIRST DANCE WITH YOUR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW
OH, THAT'S RIGHT
THEN...
MAY I DANCE THIS DANCE WITH YOU?
I WON'T DANCE WITH YOU.
I'M SORRY
...
BARON.

OH MY
JUST AS I THOUGHT
Bish
...
YOU LOOK WELL.
STANDING AROUND TALKING IS NO GOOD
BUT IF WE DO IT WHILE WE DANCE
THE WAY THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER ISN'T LIKE BEFORE
BUT
ISN'T IT EVEN MORE SCANDALOUS THAN BEFORE?

THEY WON'T LOOK EACH OTHER IN THE EYE.
THESE PAST FEW DAYS, I CAME TO UNDERSTAND ...
THAT I CAN BE HAPPY WITH EKATERINA.
I ALSO CAME TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING.
I... WHAT I NEED IS A PERSON LIKE HER.
IT HAS BEEN A WHILE SINCE I LAST CAME TO SUCH AN EVENT.
IT HAS BEEN FUN CHATTING WITH EVERYONE.
BEFORE— I WAS A POOR CONVERSATIONALIST, SO I AVOIDED CHATTING.
BUT I REALISED, IN FACT

IF YOUR HEART ISN'T IN IT,
CHATTING IS VERY EASY
I NEVER KNEW IT WAS SO EASY
IT'S MORE COMFORTABLE NOW... AND I'M GLAD FOR IT

"You should just tell him clearly that you don't want to dance."
"But... He looked so pitiful..."
"How should I behave in front of the Tsar from now on? I don't know."
"Yes, yes! I confessed to the priest that I love you"
WHAT ON EARTH HAVE I DONE TO HER?

"I will go to France with you.
Please, don't leave me behind."
I HAVE DONE SOMETHING IRREVERSIBLE?
COULD IT BE THAT...